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There is some difficulty in plainly setting out Mr. Moore's failures, for the very reason that he is seldom *decidedly* bad. He wants the *unreserved* faults as well as excellences of a free and intrepid mind. The very elaboration, which mars his beauties, takes off their nativeness, and gives most of his pictures an artificial, unsatisfying sameness, serves also to soften or obscure his defects. Where the thought fails altogether, he attempts to make up for it by a sort of verbal stress, earnestness and flow—there are musical combinations of phrases in his merest expletives—he never has an undress for fine thoughts, nor any thing short of costly apparel for those which are every-day and common. It comes of this, no doubt, that we read him with so little variety of feeling, such an evenness of interest, without offence and without rapture.

We had something to say of the songs, with which three of the poems are interspersed, and of the disadvantages under which one labours, who travels to a distant country, by books only, for scenes, characters, sentiments, and all his poetical materials. But we are obliged to take an abrupt leave of our poet, having read his book and pursued our labour with very little satisfaction, and with a conviction, all along, that he might, but never will, do better.



ART. II. *The Friend of Peace, No. 1—8. By Philo Pacificus.*  
Boston, Cummings & Hilliard.

THIS is a series of publications, issued by a member of the Peace Society of Massachusetts, and intended to direct the publick to a more attentive consideration of the subject of war. It is somewhat remarkable, that this society has received less encouragement and is in general looked upon with a less favourable eye, than any other of the charitable and benevolent institutions that have lately been established here in such numbers. We are unwilling to believe for a moment, that this disinclination to the Peace Society can be at all connected with one feature in it, which ought rather to operate in its favour—we mean the circumstance that the plan originated among ourselves, and was not, like most of these institutions, borrowed from England. In this case our plan

has been borrowed by the English, and a Peace Society, similar to that of Massachusetts, has been organized at London. In point of public patronage it has, however, shared the fate of the parent society here. While many pretendedly charitable and benevolent societies, whose objects are very equivocal, not to say dangerous, in the view of an enlightened thinker, are largely encouraged and loudly applauded, the Peace Society, which *can* produce nothing but good, and *may* produce very great good, is disregarded or ridiculed. Why this is so in Great Britain, it is not difficult to discover. Her government, like every government of the same description, is essentially military, and the class of people that direct public opinion, and more especially that patronize public institutions, have an immediate personal interest in keeping up the military system. Her power over her colonies, her influence on the continent, and in fact her aristocratical establishments at home, all rest on the basis of military power in the dominant part of the nation. This is distinctly perceived by those who take a correct view of the subject and felt by a sort of instinct through the whole circle of dependants and supporters. Hence such men as Mr. Wilberforce and his friends, who were willing to devote their lives to the cause of the Africans—and a noble cause it certainly was—have not a word to say in favour of a project tending to discourage the military spirit and bring about, if such a thing should ever be found practicable, a cessation of the custom of international war. And yet it is impossible but that they and every other friend of humanity must wish well to such a project. ‘*It is not that they love Cæsar less, but that they love Rome more.*’ In delivering the Africans from bondage, one of their motives—we may say one of their *honourable* motives—no doubt was that England would derive from the abolition of the slave trade, the glory of a humane and magnanimous policy. They could act at once the parts of lovers of their country and friends of mankind. Now these motives are disjoined, and the latter is found to be the less prevalent of the two.

With us, however, these two motives are united in favour of encouraging the plan before us. Our institutions are in their nature pacifick. Offensive war is in all cases directly against our interest—and in the offensive part of defensive war, we shall always labour under a disadvantage in com-

parison with nations that tolerate extensive military establishments. Hence every thing that tends to make a pacifick policy general among nations, has a direct bearing for our particular advantage. And hence, whatever we do from a motive of general humanity and benevolence to encourage the prevalence of peace, will afford us the additional satisfaction of promoting at the same time, the immediate and peculiar interest of our own country. We propose now to submit a few remarks upon the general subject with a view to contribute the little that lies in our power, towards the removal of such prejudices, as may exist in the minds of some against the Peace Society, and towards its general success. We shall first make one or two preliminary observations, upon certain errors, into which the friends of this society have permitted themselves to be drawn, and which may have had considerable influence in obstructing its progress.

The first of these errors, that we shall notice, is the opinion entertained and practised upon by some who have written upon this subject, that it was expedient or necessary to support the cause by pointing out particularly the supposed inconvenience and injustice of our late war with England. Now the effect of this is in the first place very disadvantageous, as it indisposes at once the minds of a large portion of the community to the whole business, and secondly the opinion itself is not philosophical. While the military system exists among nations, every consistent and rational friend of peace, however enthusiastick he may be in the cause, must admit that there may be some necessary and defensive wars. It is the system itself, which is the proper subject of attack. Now the war in question may or not have been one of this character, and this is a question into which the Peace Society and its friends are not compelled to inquire, the discussion of it being quite disconnected with their objects.

It is proper to observe, that in the pamphlets before us, there appears a disposition to keep the interest of the society entirely distinct<sup>d</sup> from party politics—and in general, the temper of the times is such at present that there is no material damage to be apprehended from this quarter. We have, however, thought it proper just to indicate the danger for the consideration of such as may discuss the subject at this or at a future time, when there may perhaps be more

excitement than there is now. It is also as well to remark, that though some have, in supporting the Peace Society, introduced topicks and opinions considered as federal, the republican party are, we believe, by their principles, at least as much interested in the success of the project as the other—since its general features coincide exactly with their views of the danger of great military establishments and consolidated authority in the civil magistracy. These observations we hope to have made, without offending the friends of either political party, both which it is the direct interest, and we presume the strong wish of the society to conciliate as much as possible.

The other point, upon which we wish to make some preliminary remarks, is the impropriety of connecting the objects of the society with the opinions of particular individuals respecting the lawfulness of self-defence. Some persons we know consider it illegal and unchristian to take the life of another in the strictest self-defence, even when the sacrifice of our own must be the consequence of forbearance. We have ourselves heard people, apparently respectable and sincere, declare that if they themselves, or to make the case still stronger, their friend or father were attacked by a highwayman, they should feel it a duty not to stand upon the defensive to such an extent as to put the life of the assailant in danger ; but should rather wait for an interposition of Providence in their behalf. This opinion, however plausible it may appear to some, is in the view of others downright nonsense, and we confess ourselves to be of this number,—we should therefore wish to see the defence of the Peace Society and the efforts made to effect its objects kept quite clear of such ridiculous enthusiasm as this. No reasonable man can entertain any doubts of his right to defend his own life against unjust violence, and in fact any other mode of conduct amounts to suicide. The principle for which such enthusiasts contend would, to be sure, if established, be a very effectual preventive of war ; but this is not the sort of assistance that we want. Admitting in its full extent the right of personal and national self-defence as generally acknowledged, there will remain sufficiently strong grounds for disapproving the practice of war and attempting to abolish it ; and we shall now proceed to make a few observations upon,

1. The real character of war.

2. The practicability of putting an end to it.

3. The probable effect of Peace Societies in promoting this object.

1. The character of war varies very much in different stages of society. Fighting merely for the love of it, appears to be the amusement and occupation of all barbarous nations. The historical annals of every people, that has any, bear witness to this. Every newly discovered island confirms it. Wherever you find men in any quarter of the globe, you are sure to find them at war ; no matter what their habits and character may be in other respects. The gentlest and the most ferocious appear to possess this taste in equal perfection. Even the indolent and voluptuous Otaheitans, and the inhabitants of the Pelew Islands, represented as the mildest and most amiable of the human race, have their natural and national enemies, with whom they carry on a series of continual wars, as perseveringly, as conscientiously and as patriotically as the French and English. Why this is so is certainly a curious subject of inquiry. No doubt if a particular examination were made with regard to each individual war that occurs even among the most barbarous tribes, some pretence of dispute between the parties would be alleged as the moving cause. But if we look at the matter philosophically, it is obvious enough that these unimportant differences are not the real reason why the wars are waged. They are only pretences which it is thought necessary to urge as a matter of form, or at best a sort of signals, to notify the parties that they are now at liberty to commence an operation that they love from other causes. We may come to this conclusion with the same certainty, that we should in private life with regard to two individuals who were constantly engaged in disputes and quarrels. In every instance they have some supposed injury to complain of, but the real difficulty is their own quarrelsome disposition. Are we to attribute the continual wars among barbarous tribes to an innate hostility of man to man, with Hobbes, or must we seek for motives in the love of excitement or the love of distinction ? However this may be, the general conclusion in point of fact is, that war is almost the only occupation of savage nations.

As refinement advances, the arts of peace are introduced. War ceases to be the only business and takes its place as one of the number of the ordinary and regular occupations of so-

ciety. At this period the manner of conducting it is improved and humanized and reduced to a system of rules, sanctioned by public opinion, to which individuals naturally submit.—Prisoners, instead of being made slaves or put to death, are treated with marked courteousness and exchanged. Private property is in some cases respected. Ambassadors are acknowledged as sacred and in general the belligerent parties pique themselves upon adopting a generous demeanour towards each other. In short, the refinement and polish that pervade all parts of the social machine, communicate themselves to war, as well as to the rest. If however we examine the causes of wars at this period of society, we shall find reason to apply to them exactly the same remark, that we have made upon those of an earlier one. In each particular case there is now, as there was then, some complaint made of wrong that has been suffered or some doubtful point put forward as being in dispute between the parties. But considering the immense disproportion between the value of the interests at stake and the sacrifices of every kind made in the course of the war, it is perfectly clear that we must look somewhere else for the real causes. It is obvious that the parties are urged on by the impulse of some interest or passion entirely independent of the supposed point at issue. In many cases this is so clear as to be quite indisputable. When for example Frederick the Great seizes Silesia and alleges certain antiquated pretensions to it, which have not the shadow of real justice—when Bonaparte, previously to his invasion of Russia, musters up his pretended list of grievances, we see at once that these allegations are almost avowedly formal. And though in some other cases there may really appear to be some doubtful interest of considerable importance in agitation between the parties, the disproportion is still so great between the value of the thing sought and the sacrifices made to obtain it, that it is quite certain, this is not the real reason of the war.

However uncertain it may be to what motive we are to attribute the disposition to hostility in uncivilized nations, there can be no great difficulty in assigning to its true causes the frequency of wars in the present state of society. These causes are unquestionably the existence of the military profession in the social system as one of the principal avenues to fortune and fame, the toleration of war in public opinion as a

part of this system, and the applause bestowed upon those, who distinguish themselves in military operations. The existence of the military profession as one of the regular occupations of society is a legacy bequeathed to us from those ages when fighting was the only employment, and the way in which it keeps up the habit of war among nations is perfectly obvious. This being one of the professions, a certain portion of every generation as they enter upon the stage of life, devote themselves to it for a subsistence. The ardent and powerful take the lead, and in order to distinguish themselves and acquire the fame and fortune that they covet, they must have war. In proportion to the importance of this profession in any particular state, its influence will have effect in regulating the publick affairs. In all the governments, both of ancient and modern Europe, this influence has always predominated over all others. If circumstances place the direction of publick affairs naturally in the hands of one of these military spirits he becomes a conqueror and directs the whole energies of his country to the destruction of his neighbours.—These wars in their mildest form are only struggles between the military professions of the two countries, carried on to be sure at the expense of the people, and accompanied by great destruction of private property. No national interest is at stake, and nations as bodies politick have really nothing to do with them but to suffer from them. Sometimes the struggle becomes more general and almost every individual is compelled to stake his life and whole fortune upon the issue. In either case the moving causes remain the same.

We are therefore to look upon war not as a method of adjusting disputes among nations, although it has this ostensible aspect and is so spoken of in declarations and manifestoes. In this sense it would be liable to all the ridicule of the ancient and exploded system of judicial combat, in which God was considered as giving victory to the side of justice. We are to consider it as nothing more than an unfortunate custom, that had its origin in times of barbarism, and is kept in existence at a period of society, with the character and manners of which it is entirely at variance, by being made the occupation of a distinct corps or profession in the state, and encouraged and justified by publick opinion.

On these principles we are to form our opinion of the justice or injustice of particular wars and of the characters of indi-



viduals who have distinguished themselves in the military profession. The morality or immorality of an action depends entirely upon the opinion of the agent with regard to it. If he thinks himself right, he is right, because he is bound at every moment to act according to his sincere conviction at the time, however faulty he may be in another respect in not sufficiently enlightening his conscience. Now when we consider how much public opinion regulates our moral notions, we ought not to judge very hardly of the character of an individual who acts up to the moral standard of his age and country. However barbarous and bloody a thing war may be in itself, and however as a custom it may be worthy of all execration, we are not to judge of the authors of any particular war precisely on the same ground, but are to inquire whether they acted up to the spirit of the times, whether they made war for those purposes for which it is generally resorted to, and in the manner in which it is generally carried on. A wise statesman, though too familiar with the subject or too much carried away by the current of contemporary politics, to avoid war entirely, will shew his judgment in resorting to it as seldom as possible. A generous spirit, though insensible by habit to the every day cruelties of the military profession, will display itself by mitigating and alleviating them as much as possible in particular instances. The same sort of charity should be extended to the class of men called conquerors as to the other members of the military profession. They, like the rest, only follow the lead of public opinion and prove themselves either more fortunate or more powerful than their brother soldiers. The motives of them all for fighting are in general about the same. Take for instance Bonaparte and Wellington, and you find their characters (independently of some particular actions, which have been attributed to the former,) substantially alike. Both are devoted by their friends to the military profession, before they are able themselves to form an opinion of its character. Both are men of high minds and indefatigable activity, and rise of course to the first honours of that profession that circumstances place within their reach. They pursue the military life as an occupation, and the justice or injustice of the wars they are engaged in is probably the last thing that enters into the minds of either.

The real thing therefore to be considered is the public opinion that tolerates this profession and the establishments con-

nected with it ; and while we extend a reasonable and proper charity to individuals, we are at full liberty to condemn, as directly and pointedly as we please, the custom itself.

But is it not necessary sometimes in self-defence ? This is the ground on which it is placed by Grotius and the civilians ; and with respect to this it may be observed, that there is probably more or less justice, which is all that can be meant in this case by necessity, on one side or other in *every* war. But taking the subject generally it is too absurd to suppose that war is a necessary part of the social system, and that nations could not get along without it, when the great wonder seems to be how they are able to exist at all with it.

We have shewn already that military conquerors are formed by the operation of the publick opinion in favour of the profession. Were it not for this they would not feel the desire or have the means of carrying on offensive operations, and there would of course be no necessity of defensive operations to meet them. In whatever light we regard the subject we still return to the same point as the source of the evil. Some have said, that if civilized nations should lay aside the military system, they would be subject to the inroads of barbarians, who would overwhelm them, as the Northern hordes did the Roman Empire. They would be an easy prey, it is said, to the first comer. This, however, is clearly a futile objection. The world is now explored, and we know that no such danger exists. *On sait*, says Rousseau, *que ce premier venu ne viendra jamais*.

War then, in its real character, is a vicious custom indefensible on any rational grounds, bequeathed to us by barbarous ancestors, and maintained in society by being made a separate profession, and by the support and encouragement of publick opinion. We now come to the second point : viz.

2. *The practicability of putting an end to the custom of war.* This point resolves itself into two branches ; the possibility and the probability of effecting the object in question.

The first inquiry is, is it *possible* in the nature of things that the custom of war should be eradicated ? And this we see no good reason to answer in the negative. War is a *vicious custom*—that is, a particular form, in which vicious dispositions exhibit themselves. Now we cannot conceive of the

absolute *impossibility* of eradicating any particular vicious habit, however deep-rooted and general it may be—and however difficult may be the attempt to remove it. Vice we know will always display itself in some form or other, until the human character undergoes a radical change; and therefore it is sometimes pretended, that wars will never come to an end. But does it follow, because vice itself cannot be removed, that there is no prospect of success in the attack of one particular form of vicious practices? This is not the sort of reasoning that we apply in other cases. Individual immoralities are also particular forms of vicious practice, and we might just as well argue from the same grounds, that it is absolutely impossible to remove them, and quite useless to do any thing with a view to that object. In regard to these, it may in fact be considered next to impossible that the object can be effected—at least we think the improbability of eradicating entirely any particular form of individual vice that may be mentioned, for instance, drunkenness, much greater than that of putting an end to wars. Yet we institute societies, write books, and preach sermons to discourage intemperance. Why should not the same thing be done with regard to war, however great we may consider the improbability of effecting a complete reformation? The reason why there is a greater probability of removing this national vice than of reforming the world in regard to individual vicious indulgences is obvious. The latter are commonly accompanied with an immediate pleasure, which acts as an incentive to the transgression of duty. War is, in its nature, at once horrible and absurd, and nothing but the force of habit, and accidental interested associations could possibly create an artificial taste for it in the mind of any body. It is obvious that such artificial associations may by possibility be overcome, however general and deep rooted they may be, and admitting even, that practices founded on some natural association of immediate pleasure with vice never can be checked. For this reason, national vices are more susceptible of reform than individual ones, and there have been some remarkable instances of success in this particular; among which are the cessation to a great degree of religious persecution—the discontinuance of the practice of killing or enslaving prisoners of war—and the almost

general abolition of the African slave trade, at least of the publick toleration of it. While these abuses existed, the idea of reforming any one of them was probably considered as wild and chimerical a notion, as some at present consider the possible cessation of war. No doubt it was looked upon as *impossible* to reform them—but now that the thing is done, we can very readily see a vast difference between them and another abuse that is not yet reformed. This difference, however, is in reality nothing more than the difference between a *thing that has been done* and a *thing that has not*. The latter is apt to be looked upon as impossible, *for*, it is said, *if this thing could have been done, it would have been done—people would have accomplished it before now—and* the world is too indolent to examine why the object may have been neglected, or whether any better reason can be given why the thing *cannot* be done, than that it *has not*. As we consider this conclusion rather in the nature of a *non sequitur*, we shall, for the reasons stated above, take it for granted that there is no *impossibility* of eradicating the custom of war, and proceed to the second point of inquiry under this head.

*What is the probability of the discontinuance of this practice?* The answer to this question depends upon the answer that may be given to the following one, which is in fact only the same question in other words. What probability is there that publick opinion may change with regard to the character of war?

The military system is sustained in the publick opinion, first, by its antiquity and the familiarity with it, derived from its long continued practice. This is of course a defence, that cannot be immediately shaken. Nothing can alter what is already past, or make this custom, as Napoleon did his Berlin and Milan decrees, to be viewed as *non avenue*. In opposition, however, to the effect of antiquity, may be urged that the practice is admitted by all to be bad. Nobody defends it, though all allow it to be ancient. It is not, therefore, of the number of those abuses, which have become so sanctified by age that they are considered as blessings, and that it is thought sacrilege to attempt to reform them. The only unfavourable effect of the antiquity of this practice, is to make the iniquity and horror of it less striking, and thus

to abate in some degree the zeal that might be felt for its removal.

The second great reason why war is tolerated by public opinion, is the manner, in which it is treated by the great majority of writers, philosophical, historical, and poetical. Nothing is so bad that it has not its bright side, and it seems to have been a malignant contrivance of the enemies of humanity, to associate with the external aspect of war as many imposing and captivating circumstances as possible. It happens, therefore, by a strange and most unnatural combination, that the preparations for the most desolating scene of misery that the earth affords, are more gorgeous and glittering, than for any other occasion whatever. Blood and murder wear the array of a pompous festival. To see a large body of troops in their costly and elegant equipments, with glittering arms and joyous faces, one would think they were going somewhere to celebrate a great and glorious national jubilee. Instead of that, they are merely marching to a distant spot to meet as many more, as gaily drest as themselves, and slaughter them in cold blood, for reasons, of which they are completely ignorant, and which are so trifling that they may be said not to exist. Such is the inconsistency between the external and actual character of war. There is also, a great developement of intellectual and physical powers in the course of these vast and dreadful struggles, and a field afforded by the various incidents of them, for all the exercise of the finest feelings and most amiable virtues. All these circumstances combine to make military transactions a very favourable subject for poetry—besides which, in the earlier stages of society when the best poets commonly appear, there is no other important or honourable line of action—nothing else is thought worth description. The consequence is, that from the time of Homer to that of Walter Scott, war has been the never ceasing theme of poetry. Description delights to dwell upon its favourable side—to expatiate on the grandeur and beauty of its external display—to describe the vigour and bravery of its heroes. The poets are a race of imitators, and it has been correctly observed before, that it is quite impossible to say how much mischief the works of Homer alone may have done the world by encouraging a taste and fondness for military scenes. The world has gradually become

better informed and more enlightened—other occupations beside the military have been introduced into society, and other views are generally entertained of war by judicious men, but it still remains the best subject of poetry, and as such continues to be constantly employed at the present day. Even Byron, who in one of his works has painted better, than any body before him, the vices of the practice, resorts to the worst species of military characters for the heroes of his narrative poems.

The historians might have been expected to be a little more considerate in their views of society and character than the poets. They must of course give narrations of wars, which have been and still are, almost the only publick business of nations; but one would naturally suppose that they would have viewed them as they are, as the bane and scourge of the world, and while they consigned them to memory, have carefully noted their true character. They have done, however, nothing of all this. They not only give a disproportionate place in their narratives to military transactions, large as the space is that they would properly occupy, but never hint, even by casual reflections, at the folly and barbarity of the custom. They speak of it with calmness and freedom as if it were the natural business of life. Military success and skill is applauded without much regard to the cause in which it has been exerted. Nothing could be more frivolous for instance, than the pretended causes of the Peloponnesian war, that laid the foundation of the ruin of Greece—nothing more infamous than many of the individual enterprises, undertaken in the course of it. But we hear from Thucydides—a profound and philosophick thinker too—no reflections on the nature of this great vice in society. He gives a clear, circumstantial, minute detail of military transactions as they occurred, with occasional acute observations on the motives of his characters. Yet one would think, that a generous mind like his, sharpened as it was by adversity, would hardly have refrained from frequent bursts of indignation, in relating how the hopes and fortunes of the cultivated world were sacrificed to the miserable passions of a few demagogues and generals. Tacitus is almost the only historian who dwells but little on military details. The reason is, however, that they did not fall within the scope of his subject. His reproofs of tyranny are so manly

and vigorous, that one is almost tempted to think that war would have appeared under his pencil in its true colours. Much might have been expected from the modern philosophick historians, Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire—but such expectations will be disappointed. The latter, in many detached passages of his various writings, exhibits as correct views of this subject as possible—but to flatter the vanity of his king, Louis XV. he dwells upon the battle of Fontenoy with the fondness of an amateur, and has given a finer graphical description of it than is extant in history of any other whatever.

However the poets and historians might have erred in their estimate of the character of the military system, it was naturally to be expected that the philosophers should have viewed it in its true light. Those who made it their profession to examine things by the clear eye of reason, and in the silence of the passions, could not certainly suffer themselves to be misled by this vulgar prejudice. Unfortunately most of the distinguished political writers have not only not discouraged the military spirit, but have actually done every thing to promote and heighten it. In the Republic of Plato, all the citizens were to devote themselves exclusively to the army, and so it was we know, in practice in the system of Lycurgus—not do we recollect any philosophical writer who has made it a business to point out the radical vice of the military system. On the contrary, all of them when they have occasion to speak of it, regard it as an established part of social order, and extol in high terms the display of military virtues and talents. Even Montesquieu observes of Alexander, among other lofty encomiums, that in the wildest sallies of his extravagance, he had a flash of reason which directed him—and that those who pretend to censure his conduct were as incapable of understanding, as they were of equalling it. And yet, this man could march his army five or six hundred miles through an African desert, in order to prevail upon an impostor to tell him he was not the son of his father—and could afterwards murder his best friend for not believing the assertion.

In process of time there arose a great scholar, who undertook to reduce war to a system of rules—we allude to the treatise of Grotius on the law of Peace and War. Unfor-

tunately this great scholar was but a poor philosopher, and although this was more the fault of his age than his own, the consequences have been very unfavourable to the cause of humanity. He justifies the practice of war on the ground of the justifiableness of personal self-defence, a thing with which, as we have shewn already, war, as a custom, has nothing to do. Taking it for granted that some wars may be justifiable, he considers it for the best that all wars should be so considered, that are once formally declared, and lays down a system of rules, calculated to mitigate to a certain degree the cruelties generally attending them. If war must continue as a part of the social system, it is, no doubt, better that it should be carried on with as little barbarity as possible, and on that supposition the treatise of Grotius may have produced great advantage. Some may also think, among those who believe in the possible discontinuance of war, that an improvement in the manner of carrying it on was a necessary step in the progress of society towards its abolition. It appears to us, however, sufficiently probable, that if Grotius, instead of temporising with it as he did, had at that time when the barbarity of it first began to be felt by the world, made a vigorous attack upon the practice itself, it would have been quite as likely to succeed, as at any subsequent period. As it was, the practice came down to succeeding generations, in the milder form in which he recommended it, sanctioned by the authority of his great name, which at the period when he lived was incalculably high. This was a sort of turning point, and was to decide whether a custom that had flourished so long through barbarous ages was to live on through ages of refinement; and the work of Grotius must have contributed considerably to the latter effect. Those who have treated this subject since Grotius have also grounded themselves almost entirely upon his work, and it is in fact rather remarkable, that this department of political philosophy, in practice by far the most important to the world, should not have been handled by any author of real ability. The writers on the law of nations are perhaps, as a class, the least valuable in the circle of political science.

The result of our observations on this point is, that the favourable manner in which war has been treated by most writers of all classes, is one principal reason why it is tolerated by publick opinion. Now it is obvious that this engine



of books may, and probably will in the course of time, be employed on the contrary side, and may be expected to act at least as efficaciously in favour of truth as it has done against it. If the elementary historical, and political treatises, that are in the hands of youth, instead of considering war as a necessary and legitimate branch of the social system, and dwelling with complacency on its details, should describe it as the principal scourge of the world, and at least as absurd as it is mischievous, it is clear that they would grow up with very different notions of it from the common ones. Poetry will of course follow in the track of publick opinion rather than lead it, because it is a sort of commodity that must be suited to the publick taste; but even in this department of literature, the progress of refinement is gradually introducing a very important and favourable change. The fictions, which have been the most popular within the last half century, describe the actions and passions of private life, and are found to possess a much deeper interest, than narratives of great political or historical movements. These, though generally in prose, come for all moral purposes under the description of poetry, and thus military virtues have already ceased to be the sole objects of interest in fictitious narration. The principal poets of Great Britain still continue, as was observed before, in their metrical compositions, to select their heroes from the class of pirates and conquerours. But it cannot be long before they will discover how much they lose by this choice. How much greater interest we feel for example in the Antiquary than in the Corsair. Nor is it necessary that the poets should lose the opportunity of describing these immense exhibitions of power and feeling, occasioned by war. It is only necessary to take a correct and fair view of the subject, so as not to mislead publick feeling, and a battle may still be as fine a subject for description as an earthquake, a plague, or an inundation.

The form of the European governments is one great objection to the probability of a reform in the management of international disputes. The Abbe de St. Pierre, who interested himself very much in this subject about a century ago in France, and wrote one or two works upon it, presented a memorial to Cardinal Fleury, then Prime Minister, ‘whose dear delight,’ says Pope, ‘was peace’—and who might, therefore, be looked upon as rather favourable to the

scheme. His answer was, ‘You have forgotten, M. l’Abbé, as a preliminary measure, to despatch a troop of missionaries, to change the hearts of kings and princes.’ It is too true, that while a few individuals, not the most likely by the terms on which they hold their power to be particularly attentive to the real interests of their subjects, have the sole direction of a number of contiguous nations, there cannot be much hope of a permanent preservation of peace. But will it not be the natural effect of the progress of political knowledge and general improvement, that the European governments will pass from the hands of hereditary rulers into those of something like a fair representation of the popular feeling and interest? Are there not even strong indications in the present aspect of Europe that the epoch of such a change is rapidly approaching? These are great questions, which would furnish matter of themselves for a long inquiry.—If however, by means of such an improvement, the governments of Europe should ever be brought to act upon a fair and enlightened view of the publick interest, it is clear that we should have no more wars. Supposing even that those governments remain as they now are, is there not room to suppose that in process of time, and in the progress of general information, the voice of publick opinion may declare itself with such clearness and decision against war, that even arbitrary governments may be compelled to listen to it—

‘War is a game which, *were their subjects wise,*  
‘Kings would not play at.’

This is poetry, but no fiction—for kings are themselves the subjects of opinion, and must obey her orders or lose their power; and perhaps, instead of doubting whether subjects will ever arrive at the point of wisdom necessary for effecting this object, we ought rather to be surprised that they have not reached it long ago.

It will be perceived from these remarks, that we place no great confidence in the league of kings and princes in Europe for the preservation of peace, sometimes called the *Holy Alliance* or *Christian Treaty*. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. If they really wish for the permanent tranquillity of the world, let them disband their standing armies, and give up their military and naval establishments. When we see them

entering into a combination to do this by common consent, we shall begin to think them in earnest, and not before. But it is little better than a mockery of the world, to make these publick professions, while they keep on foot armies of two or three hundred thousand men each, all burning for an opportunity to enjoy the occupation and profit of a new struggle. The only real ground of dependence is the intelligence and good sense of the people. When the publick voice is once clearly and fully lifted up against war, it will cease ; and till then the solemn farce of Holy Alliances will probably aggravate rather than diminish the evil.

But what can be substituted for war ? How shall national differences be terminated without it ? This reminds us of a remark of Voltaire upon a different subject—*Je vous délivre d'une bête féroce qui vous dévore et vous me demandez ce que je veux mettre à sa place.* I am delivering you from a wild beast just ready to devour you, and you ask me what I mean to put in his place. It is obvious that in this case every change must be for the better. The great adversary himself could not devise a scheme for settling disputes more fraught with mischief than the present. Most writers on this subject have recommended the establishment of an international tribunal, in the nature of an Amphictyonic council, to settle differences between nations. This was the plan of St. Pierre. Kant, who wrote a pamphlet upon it, has also recommended a sort of confederation among states for this purpose. This scheme is considered objectionable by some, on the ground that either the sovereignty of independent states must be compromised by making this tribunal sovereign over them all, or that the tribunal having no power to enforce its decrees would be entirely inefficient. We are very doubtful about the force of this objection, and think it not improbable that it would be found in practice a matter of great ease and familiarity to settle by arbitration such differences as might *bonâ fide* occur between independent nations. These would generally be of no great consequence and almost always of that kind, in which it is better for all parties, that the dispute should be settled any way than not at all.

Besides, and this is a point which we think entitled to more consideration than it has yet received—what necessity is there to provide for the determination of many international disputes ? Most of the wars waged for a century or two in Eu-

rope have nominally arisen from claims and contests, of ancient origin, bequeathed from generation to generation as standing grounds for quarrel. Now, supposing all such old matters to be once fairly adjusted, as a preliminary step to a new mode of settling national disputes in future—what new subjects could be expected to arise? Nations, it is obvious, have in reality no clashing interests. What promotes the interest of one promotes the interest of all, since it is really for the advantage of every nation that all the rest should be as prosperous as possible. It is true that if military establishments and standing armies remained, the personal interest of those connected with them would never want for pretences to engage nations in war. But the fair trial of a new system would presuppose the entire suppression of such establishments. And as we conceive this last-mentioned cause, to wit, the interest of persons connected with military establishments, to be at bottom the moving cause of most, if not all wars, we are sanguine enough to apprehend, that if this were fairly removed, there would be no great trouble found in adjusting any accidental differences. Such differences would probably, as has just been observed, be surprisingly few—and there being nobody in the state personally interested in making war about them, the utter inefficacy and inexpediency of this mode of adjusting them would strike every body too plainly to permit the thought of recurring to it. It would in fact be universally regarded as an antiquated barbarism—the principal stigma on the character of an age, that called itself civilized and enlightened. Military establishments operate like great schools for teaching the necessity and propriety of what may be called the *military system*—just as a body of clergy in the state are found a most powerful instrument for keeping up in the public mind an opinion of the necessity and expediency of religion. The first efficient step therefore that can be taken towards the overthrow of this system, will be the suppression of standing armies and military establishments.

The objection to any attempt of the kind we are considering, founded upon a misunderstanding of the doctrine of Malthus, that war is a part of the established system of nature, and that the attempt to put an end to it would be fighting against Providence—as well as the defence of war, which is sometimes set up on the authority of certain passages in

scripture, we consider too frivolous to require any attention. We shall therefore proceed immediately to make a very few remarks by way of conclusion to this article upon the third point proposed for examination, viz.

3. *The probable effect of Peace Societies in promoting the object we are considering.* And with regard to this we certainly think that such societies are among the most important and effectual means of producing that reformation in publick opinion, which we consider the only necessary preliminary to the accomplishment of the object. Publick opinion is very sympathetick and very apt to follow the lead of large and respectable bodies of men. The publicity and notoriety attendant on the meetings and proceedings of such societies are also very well calculated to attract attention to the subject—and this is all that is wanted. Let the publick mind be once directed to a serious examination of the matter, and the point is gained. These societies may be expected to meet with opposition and ridicule, but they have no reason to stand in awe of either one or the other. Their object is a good one and will defend itself against argument, nor is it very likely to be injured by the sneers of the interested or the frivolous. We have said little or nothing in the course of our remarks of the objection that is most commonly urged, that the project is a *chimerical* one. If by this is meant that it is *impossible* to execute it, we apprehend it will be rather difficult to prove the point; and even if it were certainly *impossible* to put an entire end to war, no reason can be given, as has been urged before, why every effort should not be used to discourage it on sound and proper principles. Nobody can pretend that it is impossible or improbable, that the steady exertions of societies and individuals should have some effect in discouraging a military spirit, if they cannot wholly eradicate it. If it be intended to connect with the word an idea of *absurdity*, folly or incongruity, as belonging to the plan in question, we consider the epithet as quite misapplied and belonging with much greater propriety to the practice itself. What can be more thoroughly and essentially *chimerical*, *absurd*, and *ridiculous*, than the pretence of settling a disputed boundary, or a doubtful passage in Grotius by arranging fifty or a hundred thousand men in two opposing lines, and compelling them to shoot each other down? This is the real chimera, and the attempt to put an end to it is benevolent and judicious, and deserves the approbation and encouragement of the friends of humanity.

We beg leave therefore, by way of general summary of our remarks, to observe in conclusion—that the object of the Peace Society is in our opinion more worthy than any other to engage the attention of a benevolent and enlightened mind—that much may certainly be done towards effecting this object, and that the ultimate attainment of it is by no means to be despaired of—and that such associations are among the most powerful means that can be employed towards producing these desirable effects.



ART. III. *A course of legal study respectfully addressed to the Students of Law in the United States. By David Hoffman, Professor of Law in the university of Maryland.* Baltimore, Coale & Maxwell, 1817, pp. 383.

THE great progress which has been made in mathematical and physical science during the two last centuries, has attracted the attention not only of philosophers, but of men of business. So intimately indeed has this progress connected itself with the immediate wants and comforts of mankind, that it could scarcely escape the most careless observer. But the progress of moral, political, and juridical science, during the same period, though less perceptible to the common eye, is not less wonderful; and has quite as much contributed to the improvement of the human race, and to the developement and security of their most important rights and interests. Few persons, indeed, are sufficiently aware how forcible, though silent, is the operation of laws, upon our manners, habits and feelings; and how much of our happiness depends upon a uniform and enlightened administration of publick justice. Whatever of rational liberty and security to private rights and property is now enjoyed in England, and in the United States, may in a great degree be traced to the principles of the common law, as it has been moulded and fashioned from age to age by wise and learned judges. Not that the common law in its origin or early stages was peculiarly fitted for these purposes, for the feudal system, with which it originated, or at least became early incorporated, was a system in many respects the very reverse; but that it has had the advantage of expanding with the improvements of the age, and of continually enlarg-